

#### **Media Question #1**

I understand the study of the levee plan conducted by the Vicksburg District didn't include adding pumps to prevent backwater flooding. However, a study conducted by the Corps in Mobile did. Why is that?

#### **Corps Answer (1)**

The currently proposed levee plan reduces flood risk, from the Pearl River, for the metro Jackson area. Studies that recommended this plan investigated inclusion of pumps to remove residual interior ponding resulting from local runoff. Studies indicate that the remaining minor flood damages do not economically justify the addition of pumps. Hydraulic investigations indicate that high stages on the Pearl River, in the metro Jackson area, have not historically occurred coincidentally with intense localized rainfall. Local runoff resulting from a large storm system moving thru the basin, capable of producing flooding on the Pearl River, would be drained thru floodgates in advance of the need to close floodgates to prevent backwater flooding from the Pearl River.

The Mobile District completed the Pearl River Basin Interim Report on Flood Control and Environmental Impact Statement in July 1985. As part of this study, various alternatives, including additional levees, were investigated to reduce flood risk in the metro Jackson area. This report recommended the Shoccoe Dam alternative, upstream of Ross Barnett Reservoir. Pumps were not justified at that time.

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#### **Media Question #2**

Also, I understand the levee board can do some maintenance to the current levee system to reduce flooding, such as clearing some property on the inside of the levees. At a meeting last week, Leland Speed said the Corps stopped the board from doing that. What can you tell me about that?

#### **Corps Answer (2)**

Levee maintenance is performed by the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District (levee board). In addition to maintaining the levee structures, maintenance involves periodic removal of vegetation along a 650-foot-wide cleared strip between the levees. On July 8, 1996, the levee board was issued a cease and desist order for clearing 11 acres of wetlands along the right descending bank of the Pearl River from Old Brandon Road to Fortification Street (2.2 miles). They also proposed to clear the left descending bank along the same reach of river which would impact an additional 11 acres of wetlands. A permit application was subsequently received and evaluated. After a thorough review and input from the public and resource agencies, a Department of the Army Permit was issued on August 25, 1999, for the mechanized land clearing of 22 acres of wetlands within the 650-foot ROW for a distance of 2.2 miles.

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**Media Question #3**

The Corps didn't mention economic development possibilities in a letter dated February 10 regarding the levee plan. Is the agency going to allow for economic development on the property? Why or why not?

**Corps Answer (3)**

Economic development is not a mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, nor is it a authorized project purpose. However, the Corps fully understands local entities desire for economic development. We do not oppose economic development by others, provided development does not interfere with the project's flood risk reduction purpose, or its' operation and maintenance, and meets Federal environmental laws and regulations.

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**Media Question #4**

I looked at information from the 2007 draft feasibility study and it included the costs for taking in property. From my standpoint it seems that the Corps is offering a much lower figure for the property than it is currently worth. Can you tell me if that's the case, and also how the agency came up with those figures?

**Corps Answer (4)**

Real estate values included in the feasibility study under total project costs are estimates only. No offer is being made to purchase property. Non-Federal cost sharing requirements for a Federal flood risk reduction project includes, the non-Federal sponsor, providing all required lands, easements, rights-of-way, relocations, and dredged material disposal areas. The purchase price would be negotiated between the non-Federal sponsor and landowners, at the time the property was acquired for the project. Real estate values included in the report were based on a review of the most recent sales and listings available in the area at that time.

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